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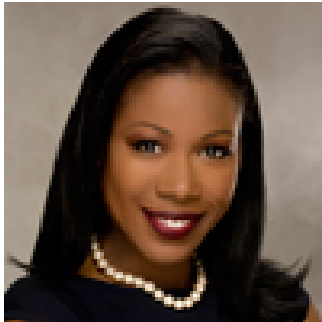
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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## AN EPIC STORYTELLER

**11.02.2012 | Campus and Community, Culture and Society, Hot Topics, Students**

Isabel Wilkerson, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and bestselling author of *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, will offer a talk at the University of Dayton on Nov. 13.

Wilkerson's 7:30 p.m. address in the Kennedy Union Ballroom is part of the University of Dayton Speaker Series. It's free and open to the public, and a book signing will follow the talk. Parking is available in lots C and P.

"Wilkerson's work has been hugely and broadly influential. We are so pleased to be able to bring her perspective and insights about the Great Migration to bear on our consideration, in this year's series, of education as a force for personal and social transformation," said Sheila Hassell Hughes, chair of the University of Dayton's English department, who directs the series.

In 1994, Wilkerson won a Pulitzer Prize for her work as Chicago bureau chief of *The New York Times* for pieces on the rural heartache of the Midwest floods and a profile of a 10-year-old boy on the South side of Chicago. She was the first African-American woman in the history of American journalism to win a Pulitzer Prize.

Inspired by her own parents' migration, Wilkerson devoted 15 years to the research and writing of *The Warmth of Other Suns*, which won a National Book Critics Circle Award. She interviewed more than 1,200 people, unearthed archival works and gathered the voices of the famous and the unknown to tell the epic story of the mass movement of black Americans from the South in this extraordinary piece of narrative journalism.

"In many respects Ms. Wilkerson does for the Great Migration what John Steinbeck did for the Okies in his fiction masterpiece, *The Grapes of Wrath*; she humanizes history, giving it emotional and psychological depth," wrote John Stauffer in a Sept. 4, 2010, review in *The Wall Street Journal*. "She is especially good at capturing the experiential sense of life in the poor South and of the migration itself. Few histories better convey the grueling repetition required to pick 100 pounds of cotton a day for 50 cents. She gets inside the heads of the people she's writing about and gives readers a penetrating sense of what it felt like to be a part of the vast move north."

*The Warmth of Other Suns* was named a finalist for the 2011 Dayton Literary Peace Prize. Wilkerson also won a George Polk Award, a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship for her research into the Great Migration, and she was named Journalist of the Year by the National Association of Black Journalists. She has lectured on narrative writing at the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University and has served as Ferris Professor of Journalism at Princeton University and as the James M. Cox Jr. Professor at Emory University. She is currently professor of journalism and director of narrative nonfiction at Boston University.

Co-sponsors for the University of Dayton Speaker Series include the Dayton Daily News, WDAO-Radio, YWCA Dayton, the Bob Ross Auto Group Ross and Markey's Audio Visual.

For more on the University of Dayton Speaker Series, see [go.udayton.edu/speakerseries](http://go.udayton.edu/speakerseries). For more on Isabel Wilkerson, see <http://isabelwilkerson.com/>

**Contact Sheila Hassell Hughes, director of the University of Dayton Speaker Series, at 937-229-3434 or Andrea Wade, communication and events coordinator for the office of the provost, at 937-229-1723.**